

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1200

May 6, 2019

To: General Authorities; General Auxiliary Presidencies; Area Seventies; Temple, Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Discontinuation of One-Year Waiting Period after Civil Marriage

We affirm that the sealing of a man and woman in the temple offers eternal blessings to the couple and their posterity that can be gained in no other way. We encourage all such couples to qualify for sealing ordinances and blessings.

The policy requiring couples who have been married civilly to wait one year before being sealed is now discontinued. Couples who have been married civilly may be sealed in the temple when they receive their temple recommends.


Where possible, leaders should encourage couples to be both married and sealed in the temple. Where a licensed marriage is not permitted in the temple, or when a temple marriage would cause parents or immediate family members to feel excluded, a civil ceremony followed by a temple sealing is authorized.

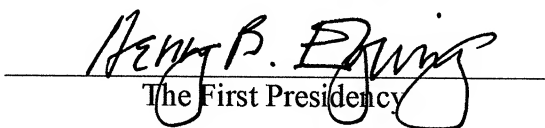
We anticipate that this change will provide more opportunities for families to come together in love and unity during the special time of marriage and sealing of a man and woman.

We are grateful for your dedicated and inspired leadership in helping members understand, prepare for, and enjoy the blessings of eternal marriage.

Sincerely yours,







The First Presidency

Discontinuation of One-Year Waiting Period after Civil Marriage

Enclosure to the First Presidency letter dated May 6, 2019

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

1. How can the eternal significance of the temple sealing be emphasized when a civil marriage is also performed?

This change in policy should not be interpreted as lessening the emphasis on the temple sealing. The sealing of a husband and wife in the temple is of eternal significance and a crowning experience on the covenant path.

Where possible, couples should be encouraged to be simultaneously married and sealed in the temple. Where a licensed marriage is not permitted in the temple, or when a temple marriage would cause parents or immediate family members to feel excluded, a civil ceremony followed by a temple sealing is authorized.

A civil marriage ceremony performed for a couple being sealed in the temple should be simple and dignified. Leaders help members understand the importance and sanctity of the temple sealing so that the sealing is the central focus of the marriage and provides the spiritual basis on which the couple begins their life together.

2. How soon after civil marriage should members be sealed in the temple?

There is no specific time frame within which members should be sealed after being married civilly. Priesthood leaders interview couples and provide temple recommends when the couple is both worthy and ready to be sealed in the temple. Worthy and prepared couples can be sealed as soon as circumstances permit.

3. Can Church meetinghouses be used for civil marriages?

Yes. As soon as possible, those who are planning a civil marriage in a Church meetinghouse should meet with their bishop to review the guidelines found in *Handbook 1*, 3.6.3.

4. Do newly baptized members need to wait a year before being sealed in the temple?

Yes. New members are eligible to receive their endowment and be sealed in the temple one year from the date of their confirmation. If they choose to be married civilly during that year, they can still be sealed one year from the date of their confirmation. As they prepare to receive their endowment and be sealed, they can qualify for and use a limited-use temple recommend for proxy baptisms and confirmations. Leaders could also encourage them to gather family names for temple ordinances.